

The **Pacific Insight Briefs** capture climate and disaster integration knowledge, lessons, and insights from the Australia Pacific Climate Partnership (Climate Partnership). The five thematic briefs draw on the experience of the Climate Partnership's community of aid program managers, implementing partners, technical experts, and staff.



## Pacific Insight Brief 2 | Climate and Disaster Integration –challenges and benefits of an integration delivery model

The aid program is the primary mechanism through which Australia currently delivers on its climate finance and resilient development commitment in the region. Climate and disaster resilient development is enabled when donors, governments, civil society and the private sector make inclusive and strategic development choices that prioritise risk reduction, resilience, equity and justice across all levels of governance, sector development, and timeframes.

The 'integration model', which sees all aid program investments responsible for taking steps to enhance climate and disaster resilience provides an effective means to build climate and disaster resilience at a broadscale; reduce ad-hoc and mal-adaptive approaches and maximise efficiencies.

This brief provides insights based on the Climate Partnership's experience in supporting climate and disaster integration across the aid program in the Pacific including lessons, barriers and opportunities.

### Insights



**Integration promotes a risk informed and climate and disaster resilient approach across all development:** A resilience-focused integration approach promotes climate as 'everybody's business' in recognition that climate change impacts all sectors. Complemented with *targeted* climate investments, integration facilitates access and delivery of climate finance into a broader base of development sectors.

Further, by seeking to embed risk considerations systematically across policy, governance, programming and other systems an integration approach initiates opportunities for stronger cross-sectoral coordination and partnership and can support the achievement of resilient development outcomes at scale and for the long term.

**Integration aligns with and supports the priorities and interests of Pacific Island countries:** Pacific Island countries seek to mainstream climate and disaster resilience across government policy and planning. This is reflected through regional frameworks such as the *Framework for Resilient Development in the Pacific 2016-2030* and national policies such as National Adaptation and Disaster Plans.

By working through and across government sectors, integration can facilitate climate and disaster resilience and risk mainstreaming via a sector led approach. It allows engagement on priority resilience issues with a diversity of sector stakeholders, who may otherwise not be enabled or supported to consider climate and disaster risk in their sector context, despite policy objectives to do so.

Integration also facilitates a multi-hazards approach aligned with Pacific regional preferences to bring together considerations of climate change and disasters.

**Integration helps avoid mal-adaptation:** By taking a broadscale climate and disaster risk informed approach to development challenges and priorities, mal-adaptation or increased vulnerability can be avoided that may otherwise arise from confining climate considerations to siloed and narrowly focused climate adaptation initiatives. Optimal approaches can be identified and employed through balancing climate and disaster risk factors with longer-term development priorities and goals for the sector, and ensuring adequate community engagement to ensure the balance is right. While this may involve some added complexity and trade-offs, it can also help to avoid 'locking in' vulnerability in the longer term.

**Integration promotes transformational development:** Climate and disaster resilient development processes that move beyond incremental, stand-alone and siloed adaptation can be transformational. Integration approaches which adopt cross-sectoral and holistic perspectives for development and engage with systemic risks and vulnerabilities can help address inequality and injustice, strengthen government systems and planning, and access to services.

## Case example | Upgrades to Bareaumai Primary School in Bonriki, Kiribati, demonstrate transformative change

Classroom buildings in Bareaumai Primary School in Kiribati have been upgraded to be more climate and disaster resilient through the Australian Government supported *Kiribati Education Improvement Program (KEIP)*. Raised flooring of the classrooms has reduced the impact of king tides and sea water flooding the school. Ramps have made the school accessible for students in wheelchairs. The upgrade, which was undertaken to reduce climate and disaster impacts on the school, has meant children can attend more school days of the year. The school upgrade has strengthened community commitment to education and parent and teacher efforts for Bareaumai Primary School.



This change was described by parent members of the Parents and Teachers Association: *'Before this was a place of chaos – and children were not attending school. The value of school was so low, now with KEIP, people have rediscovered the value of education.'*

## Lessons



The Climate Partnership has developed principles and good practices for how to undertake integration actions based on experience and lessons learned. The following is a brief snapshot of high-level learnings for effective integration.

### **Get in early and define resilient development objectives.**

The best integration approaches are those that are adopted early in an aid investment. This involves understanding the climate and disaster risk context, identifying specific risk to investment outcomes, incorporating relevant (national, sectoral, community) resilience priorities, and setting out strategies and actions to mitigate risk and maximise resilient development opportunities. By being clear and intentional regarding integration approaches, investments are also better set-up to account for and report climate finance allocations and results.

### **Leverage Pacific interest in climate change and support leadership capacity.**

Climate change is a priority across the Pacific, and there is often a latent interest and capacity across sectors, which with support from the aid program, can be unlocked. While not always the case, many sectors are wanting to engage on climate and contribute to climate action from their sector perspective but are not empowered or supported to do so. It is important, and there is value in aid investments facilitating and initiate dialogue with sector and climate agency counterparts as part of investment design and delivery processes.

**Support local actors and value local knowledge.** The principles of localisation apply to climate and disaster resilience integration. The impact of climate change and disasters is felt locally, and solutions need to be contextually specific and locally owned. When effective participation of all stakeholders in a diverse social context is facilitated, integration can be more effective with stronger ownership from communities and reduced risks of mal-adaptation.

Similarly, while western climate science is important in understanding broad climate trends and forecasts, integration of local knowledge and perspectives is key. Brokering local knowledge comes with challenges and so working with CSOs embedded in local contexts with strong understanding of community resilience strengths and needs can be useful.

**Invest.** It can be easy to view climate and disaster resilience integration as an additional expense and management burden. The cost of inaction has been proven to outweigh the costs of action in the longer term. By allocating flexible, scalable and dedicated resources to progress climate and disaster resilient outcomes, investments will be supported to demonstrate longer-term impact and value for money.

## Case example | Integration of climate and disaster resilience in the Samoan education sector

The Australian and New Zealand governments are working in partnership with the Samoan government to deliver a Climate and Disaster Resilience Strategy for the education sector through the provision of budget support. This case example represents an effective approach to sector wide integration of climate and disaster resilience as it incorporated the following aspects:



- Climate change specialist included on the design of the program.
- Draws on the Samoan Education Sector Plan which identifies the development of a Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience Strategy.
- Budget support and implementation plan for the development of the Climate Change and Disaster Risk Resilience Strategy.
- Funding for technical assistance identified to develop and support implementation of the strategy.
- Climate change and disaster resilience focal point identified to coordinate across the Education sector.

*‘The strategy is also streamlined with the implementation, financial management, reporting, monitoring and evaluation processes of the Education Sector Plan. This approach recognises that the management of climate change and disaster risks must be incorporated into strategic planning and operational functions of Implementing Agencies, schools and school committees, and training providers.’ (Education Sector Climate Change & Disaster Resilience Strategy 2021 – 2024).*

## Opportunities



Corporate, industry, community, and public sectors are all shifting to integrate climate risk in their business. Building on progress to date, there are a range of opportunities to further strengthen how the Australian aid program deals with climate and disaster risk, and supports resilient development outcomes in the region through integration. The international development community has committed to applying principled and good practices to enable access to climate finance<sup>1</sup>, which can guide integration approaches.

**Strengthen the enabling environment.** Coinciding with the new aid policy and country aid planning, steps to drive and guide more strategic and coordinated approaches; standardised tools and applications; and demand stronger results reporting will accelerate and make more impactful delivery of Australia’s climate finance commitments. This may drive growth in awareness, capacity, and resource allocation.

**Monitor for results and impact.** With an increasing focus on demonstrating commitment and delivery of climate and disaster resilient development action in the region, opportunities to further strengthen the evidence base of impact, lessons and progress can be enhanced. Distinguishing distinct climate and disaster resilient development outcomes can be challenging within the integration model, and so strategic, clear and standardised approaches across the aid program may offer benefits.

**Enhance engagement.** The integration approach affords opportunities for engagement across all development sectors, though it may also dilute focus on engagement with mandated climate agencies and stakeholders. Looking ahead, opportunities to continue to work across sectors while focusing and coordinating engagement with ministries of climate change can be progressed. In PNG for example the joint PNG Australian Climate Change Action Plan, Annual Dialogue and working level steering committee help focus engagement and coordination.

<sup>1</sup> For example, the Climate Finance Working Group within the UNFCCC.

**Maximise cross-sectoral opportunities and include and all hazards approach.** There are often synergies and shared priorities and needs across sector development programmes and efforts to identify more efficient and effective ways of programming climate finance across sectoral areas may yield impact. A whole-of-country aid program strategy on climate and disaster integration could underpin efforts.

**Leverage all aid modalities and climate finance opportunities.** The aid program is delivered via a range of implementation modalities ranging from multi-sector service platforms, embedded technical assistance, bi-lateral and regional programs, direct budget support (and so on).

Each aid modality comes with unique opportunities to drive and support effective climate and disaster resilience action. Standard principles, strategies, and guidance could be usefully applied to all respective modalities, to systematically drive climate and disaster resilience. The value of dedicated bi-lateral climate investments as flagships of Australia's support can also be considered. Opportunities to co-finance with multi-lateral funds can also be explored. Australia's co-finance and coordination with the Solomon Islands Hydro-Electric; and support for the Tonga Renewable Energy Project investments are strong case examples.

### Case example | PNG Transport Sector Support Program

PNG's Transport Sector Support Program (TSSP) recognises that roads help drive the national economy. The Climate Partnership's supported TSSP in developing an Environmental Safeguards Climate Change and Disaster Resilience (ESCCDR) Strategy, which outlines raft of strategies for building a climate and disaster resilient transport sector in PNG. TSSP has invested in an in-house climate adviser, who is driving engagement with Government of PNG officials on climate and disaster resilience priorities. Working with the Climate Change Development Authority's (CCDA) a working group of transport sector representatives has been established and coordination on shared priorities are being progressed. This includes priorities on policy reform, capacity development, and practical actions to reduce emissions from transport operations. This approach demonstrates a systematic, coordinated and sustainable integration approach for resilient development outcomes being driven by an Australia aid investment.